

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Official Action, claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over HAO et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,844,553) in view of SEBASTIAN et al. (U.S. Patent No. Re. 36,602).

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-17 have been amended. Claims 1-17 are currently pending for consideration by the Examiner.

Pursuant to M.P.E.P. §714.13, Applicants submit that entry of the present amendment is appropriate because the proposed amended claims avoid the rejections set forth in the Final Official Action, resulting in the application being placed in condition for allowance, or alternatively, the revised claims place the application in better condition for purposes of appeal. Furthermore, Applicants submit that the amendment does not present any additional claims. Accordingly, entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. More particularly, the Final Official Action asserts that claims 1 and 6 are indefinite since the claim term “assuming” is a relative term. Thus, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to replace the term “assuming” with alternative language. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the language of amended independent claims 1 and 6 is not indefinite, and respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over HAO in view of SEBASTIAN. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. However, in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application to allowance, Applicants have amended

independent claims 1 and 6 to recite additional patentable features. Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended independent claims 1 and 6 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, in view of the combination of HAO and SEBASTIAN, for at least the following reasons.

With regard to amended independent claim 1, Applicants submit that neither HAO, SEBASTIAN, nor the combination thereof, disclose a processing program edition conferencing process that includes the specific interaction of three separate entities at three distinct geographical locations in the specific manner recited in amended claim 1. More specifically, amended independent claim 1 explicitly recites that an initial contractor is located at a first location, that a customer is located at a second location, and that an outsourcing center is located at a third location. Amended independent claim 1 further describes the specific interaction among the computers of the initial contractor, the customer, and the outsourcing center throughout the claim.

Applicants also submit that neither HAO nor SEBASTIAN disclose the feature where a customer uses a computer at the second location to send a request to manufacture the sheet metal product together with technical data for sheet metal product production to the computer of the initial contractor at the first location.

Additionally, Applicants note that the Final Official Action acknowledges that neither HAO nor SEBASTIAN disclose assuming complete remote control of the initial contractor's computer. However, the Final Official Action asserts Official Notice that assuming remote control over a computer is well known in the art. Applicants respectfully traverse the taking of Official Notice in this particular instance, since Applicants submit that the explicitly claimed taking of complete remote control, and remotely operating the initial contractor's computer in the

specific manner recited in amended independent claim 1, is not common knowledge or well-known in the art. Applicants specifically point to where amended claim 1 recites that the computer of the outsourcing service center at the third location logs into the computer of the initial contractor at the first location, and takes complete remote operational control over the computer of the initial contractor. Further, amended claim 1 explicitly recites that the remote operation of the computer of the initial contractor includes reviewing the technical data for sheet metal production from the customer and entering plans for the manufacture of the sheet metal product by the initial contractor. Thus, Applicants submit that at least the above recited features of amended claim 1 are not common knowledge or well known in the art, and respectfully submit that in view of reasons presented above, that documentary evidence must be provided in order to support such an assertion. See M.P.E.P. § 2144.03 C.

Further, Applicants submit amended independent claim 1 recites that the computer of the initial contractor at the first location transmits an initial contractor cost estimate to manufacture the sheet metal product and an estimated delivery schedule, based on the entered plans, to the computer of the customer at the second location. Applicants further submit that neither HAO, SEBASTIAN, nor the combination thereof, disclose, teach, or render obvious this feature of amended independent claim 1 as well.

Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants submit that amended independent claim 1 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, in view of the combination of HAO and SEBASTIAN. Applicants also submit that amended independent claim 6 is also patentable, for reasons similar to the reasons discussed above regarding amended independent claim 1, since independent claim 6 recites features similar to amended independent claim 1. Further, Applicants submit that claims 2-5 and 7-17 which

depend upon one of amended independent claims 1 and 6, are patentable for at least the reasons discussed above, and further for the additional features recited therein. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over HAO in view of SEBASTIAN be withdrawn.

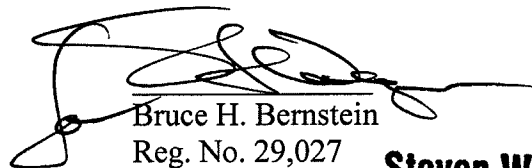
SUMMARY

From the amendments, arguments, and remarks provided above, Applicants submit that all of the pending claims in the present application are patentable over the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Final Official Action is respectfully requested and an indication of allowance of claims 1-17 is now believed to be appropriate.

Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between the claims prior to the present amendment and the amended claims. Further, no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections is made by the present amendment. All other amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,
Yukio FUKUI et al.



Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

Steven Wegman
Reg. No. 31,438

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GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191